

MFRC Guideline Implementation Monitoring Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2000

In attendance: Dave Parent, Roger Scherer, Bob Oswald, Mike Phillips (staff), and Dick Rossman (staff).

Absent: Shawn Perich and Rich Holm.

Guests: Mike Kilgore, Steve Galay, Bonnie DeLare, and Bill Befort.

Dave opened the GIMC meeting at 10:30 a.m. Introductions were made.

The following document was handed out at the GIMC meeting:

- Air photo interpretation worksheet

Aerial Photo Interpretation

Mike Phillips reviewed the process of selecting potential monitoring sites from aerial photographs of primary sampling units (PSU). Mike indicated that we have 62 confirmed harvesting sites for evaluation to date. Mike explained that we have identified fewer potential monitoring sites than we had anticipated based on Alan Ek's estimate of the average number of harvesting sites that should be found in each ½ township. Mike also indicated that he sent a request to the state, counties, USFS and private industries requesting that they provide a complete list of all sites harvested within the PSUs from 12/97 through 1/00 so that we could compare the list with the aerial photos for that PSU. Bonnie and Steve will evaluate that list with the aerial photos of the PSUs. All of the additional sites that fall within the PSUs that are provided by the various organizations will be included in the sample pool of sites to be monitored.

Bonnie and Steve reviewed the pluses and minuses of using aerial photography to identify the harvesting sites. Steve considers this process to be a work in progress and that we will modify as appropriate. One of the concerns discussed was our capabilities to identify all levels of harvesting in the forested landscape.

There was considerable discussion on improving our abilities to identify NIPF sites. Steve suggested that using the aerial photos for this purpose would always be problematic since many of these sites will be less intensive cuts on smaller acreages. Roger wondered if we should focus our efforts on public and private industrial lands before we get deeply involved with reviews of NIPF lands. Dave suggested that we will be continually criticized until we address the NIPF issue.

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Bill Befort reviewed the use of digitized satellite imagery for detecting forest harvesting. He thinks we may be able to identify all levels of harvesting with the use of this technology. The discussion centered around the use of scenes (115 x115 miles) that would allow us to detect harvesting by detection of changes in the scenes from one year to the next. Bill thinks that our ability to detect various levels of harvesting will improve in future years with the types of technology that is becoming available.

Bill provided a web site address (www.ra.dnr.state.mn.us) where MN DNR aerial photos and satellite images can be viewed over the internet.

Mike Kilgore suggested that all parties to the development of this process will meet once we have completed much of the initial monitoring to discuss and propose modifications to the process of selecting harvesting sites. This meeting will serve as a forum to discuss the lessons learned and the changes needed to make the process of site identification more effective. Mike Phillips thought the meeting would be held sometime in June.

Resources Identified on Aerial Photos

Bonnie DeLare and Dick Rossman led a discussion on the types of measures that can be derived directly from the aerial photos and thus not need to be collected by the implementation monitoring contractors. Dick handed out the air photo interpretation worksheet and reviewed its components. Most of the discussion focused on the ability of the photo interpreter to measure the width of streams. Mike Phillips asked how long it would take to do this analysis for 120 sites. Steve indicated that there would be a learning curve, and that after several are completed, the rest would go much faster. He estimated that it would initially take about an hour/photo but would likely then drop to about ½ hour/photo.

Discussion of Implementation Monitoring Proposals

Mike Phillips discussed the review process for selecting the contractor for conducting the implementation monitoring of timber harvesting sites. The successful proposal was awarded to Forest Management Specialists, Inc. located in Grand Rapids. Mike indicated that the DNR received 14 proposals of variable quality. The estimated budgets in these proposals for monitoring ranged from \$30,000 to \$160,000. The successful proposal has a budget of approximately \$39,000.

Monitoring Riparian Forests and Seasonal Ponds.

Dave Parent proposed that oversight for this effort mandated in the Sustainable Forest Resources Act be given to the GIMC. Dave will suggest to the MFRC that a point person be appointed by the DNR to address this issue. Dave will propose to the MFRC that Mike Phillips, representing the GIMC, and the MFRC's Executive Director work directly with the DNR on this project.

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Dave also suggests that the DNR's point person provide a white paper to the GIMC on addressing this issue and that this white paper will serve as the basis for a presentation on this issue to the MFRC at a time to be determined by the MFRC's Executive Director.

Outputs from Analysis of Implementation Monitoring Data

Dave Parent asked Mike Phillips to prepare a letter for each MFRC member soliciting input on what outputs they would like to see from the analysis of the monitoring data. This response needs to be to Mike by June 30, 2000.

Status of Computerization of Guideline Measure Forms

Mike Phillips provided an update on computerizing the guideline measures into the Husky field computers. Although the work is going well, the costs for completing the work have increased significantly. The estimate is that the final cost will be around \$50,000.

Status of Seasonal Pond Research

Mike Phillips provided an overview of the status of the proposed seasonal pond research to be conducted by the USFS. Mike stated that the sites for the research will likely be located on state, Cass County, Blandin, and possibly Potlatch lands.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. GIMC members were invited by Bill Befort to view ForNet to see the imaging capabilities of the DNR.